

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name East Suffolk School Complex (131-5046)

other names/site number East Suffolk Elementary School, East Suffolk High School, East Suffolk Middle School

**2. Location**

street & 231 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street ☐ not for publication  
number \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town Suffolk (independent city) ☐ vicinity  
state Virginia code VA county Suffolk (ind.) code 800 Zip 23434

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the National Register

☐ removed from the National Register

☐ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action

Signature of Keeper

**U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Name of Property:** East Suffolk School Complex  
**Location:** Suffolk, Virginia

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property** (Check as many boxes as apply)

_____	private
<u>  X  </u>	public—local
_____	public—state
_____	public—Federal

**Category of Property** (Check only one box)

<u>  X  </u>	building (s)
<u>     </u>	district
<u>     </u>	site
<u>     </u>	structure
<u>     </u>	object

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3		buildings
	2	sites
		structures
		objects
3	2	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)[illegible]

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

[illegible]

U. S. Department of the Interior  
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Name of Property: East Suffolk School Complex  
Location: Suffolk, Virginia

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19<sup>th</sup> and EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival

MODERN MOVEMENT: Moderne

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### Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation BRICK, CONCRETE

Roof METAL: Tin, ASPHALT

Walls BRICK, CONCRETE

Other

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**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- X   A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

(Rev. 10-90)

U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceName of Property: East Suffolk School Complex  
Location: Suffolk, Virginia**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

ETHNIC HERITAGE: Black

**Period of Significance** 1926-1952**Significant Dates** 1926 – commencement of construction on East Suffolk Elementary School

1927 – opening of East Suffolk Elementary School

1938 – commencement of construction on East Suffolk High School

1939 – opening of East Suffolk High School

1944 – opening of Agricultural Building

**Significant Person** (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation** N/A**Architect/Builder** State Department of Education (Virginia)**See Continuation Sheet for other Architects****Narrative Statement of Significance** (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary Location of Additional Data**☒ State Historic Preservation Office.☐ Other State agency☐ Federal agency☐ Local government☐ University☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Name of Property:** East Suffolk School Complex  
**Location:** Suffolk, Virginia

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 6

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	<u>18</u>	<u>360320</u>	<u>4065310</u>	3	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
2	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	4	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

X See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kimble A. David, Architectural Historian

Organization date 5 September 2002

street & number    P. O. Box 7638    telephone    757/623.3456

city or town: Norfolk state: VA zip code: 23509

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

## Continuation Sheets

## Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

## Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number telephone

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**East Suffolk School Complex  
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**Architectural Description**

**Summary Architectural Description**

The East Suffolk School Complex is a series of three contributing buildings and two non-contributing sites dating from 1926 to 1951. The earliest building on the site is the East Suffolk Elementary School, which is a Colonial Revival, brick school with a central auditorium flanked by classrooms. The school is one-story, with a central entrance and hipped roof. The school is located at the entrance to the site and faces north to the roadway that leads east onto the site from South 6<sup>th</sup> Street. To the immediate east of the East Suffolk Elementary School is the East Suffolk High School. The high school was constructed in a similar style and uses similar material. It is oriented in the same manner as the elementary school, and was constructed in 1938-1939. The last remaining building constructed on the site was a gymnasium located to the north of the elementary school on the north side of the roadway. Unlike the other buildings on the site, the gymnasium is oriented to South 6<sup>th</sup> Street. It is a Moderne building and uses modern materials with modern architectural elements, such as concrete walls, and a flat roof. The two sites are foundations of a Home Economics building, constructed in 1956 and Agricultural building, constructed in 1944 that were demolished in the 1980s. The grouping of buildings forms a cohesive educational setting dating from 1926 to 1952.

**Detailed Architectural Description**

The site is organized in a similar manner to the existing street gridiron-pattern established in the adjacent community. The parcel is irregular in shape with access from South 6<sup>th</sup> Street and South 7<sup>th</sup> Street. The parcel is bound by South 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west. Camp Mill Pond Run, a creek, is the south boundary, and residential parcels define the east boundary. The terminus of South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, residential parcels, and a large school parcel defines the north boundary.

The site is divided by an east-west roadway that extends east from South 6<sup>th</sup> Street dividing the parcel into two distinct areas. The Elementary and High school buildings, and the Home Economics building site are located to the south of the roadway and back up to the creek. The Agricultural building foundation is located at the terminus of the roadway, just to the north. The gymnasium is located on the north side of the roadway and is oriented to South 6<sup>th</sup> Street. It is the only building on site oriented to the adjoining neighborhood. The function of the building, its later construction date, and location account for a reorientation of this building.

**East Suffolk Elementary School**

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The East Suffolk High School is a Colonial Revival style, one-story brick building with a central auditorium plan surrounded by classrooms. The school is located within a complex of African-American school buildings dating from 1926 to 1956. It has a central, projecting entrance and projecting end walls joined by wing walls. The entrance is articulated with a one-bay, hipped-roof porch with Tuscan columns. Double-hung, wood, sash, windows dominate the north façade of the wing walls. The end walls have recessed brick panels on the façade.

The roof is treated with standing seam, metal and is a cross-hipped roof accenting the central block with perpendicularly oriented ends. Exterior doors located on the south wall are double-leaf.

The east and west side elevations have three groupings of five window openings per side. The windows have been replaced with 2-part metal hoppers, but the openings have been retained. .

The interior is comprised of a central auditorium surrounded by hallways. The halls form a square that encircles the auditorium. Upon entering the building, there is a small vestibule that gains access to the main building and north hall. The north hall is east-west oriented and gains access to classrooms located to the east and west ends of the building. There are doors to the auditorium on the north hall at the east corner.

The auditorium consists of an open space with an elevated stage at the south end. The stage is raised approximately 2 feet and is decorated with recessed panels. Stairs to access the stage are located off the hallways on the east and west ends at the south corners. The stage floor is tongue and groove wood. The auditorium flooring is modern linoleum tile and the wall finishes have been replaced with drywall.

The classrooms on the east and west ends remain intact in terms of space, but various finishes have been altered. Along the east wall, the north classroom has been partitioned into offices. The rooms have been carpeted and the walls replaced with dry wall. The central classroom on the north wall retains its original beaded-board ceiling, closet space and chalkboards, but the walls have been treated with wallpaper and the flooring is modern linoleum tile. The south classroom has been partitioned into a kitchen and storage room.

On the west side of the auditorium, the north and central classroom have been combined forming a large room, which can be divided by a modern screen. According to the tenant, the wall was removed. The room retains its beaded-board ceiling, chalkboards, and closets with paneled doors. The flooring is modern linoleum tile. The south room has been converted to a library and was inaccessible.

The doors to the classrooms were replaced and the transoms have been filled. The classrooms on the west

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side of the building retain their original fixed multiple-light windows on the east side of the classroom between the room and hall. These windows served to illuminate the interior corridor.

**East Suffolk High School**

The East Suffolk High School is a Colonial Revival style, one-story brick building with a double-loaded corridor plan, and eight classrooms. It has a central entrance, hipped roof, and perpendicularly oriented cafeteria addition constructed in 1952 at the east elevation. The entrance is articulated with a one-bay, pedimented Colonial Revival porch with Tuscan columns. Double-hung, wood, sash, windows dominate the north façade and south elevations.

The exterior brick walls have a 3-course American bond treatment, but instead of a row of header bricks the row consists of a Flemish bond treatment. The north and south elevations have paired 8/8, double-hung sash windows with concrete sills. There is a single 8/8, double-hung sash window flanking the entrance porch on the façade. On the west elevation, there is a centrally placed entrance to the main corridor. It is articulated with soldier- and stretcher-course brick framing. Flanking the entrance are decorative brick frames with soldier- and stretcher-course bricks with a similar proportion to the windows on the north and south elevations. The roof is hipped and clad with standing-seam metal. There is a wood cornice below the eaves that serves as the window lintels. On the south rake of the roof near the east corner is an interior brick chimney, which serves as the heating system flue.

The cafeteria addition retains the same massing and articulation as the original school building. It continues the cornice and paired window configuration on the north façade and south elevation. On the east elevation, there are single and paired windows. A single leaf entrance is located on the east elevation near the north corner sheltered by a pent overhang.

The entrance to the school is located centrally on the original school building and is sheltered by a porch. The porch is comprised of a poured concrete floor resting on a brick foundation, sheltered by a gable roof supported by clustered, wood, Tuscan columns. The doors are double-leaf and wood with multiple lights surmounted by a multiple-light transom. The doors gain access to a small foyer perpendicularly oriented to the main corridor.

The interior consists of a double-loaded corridor with single leaf, wood, paneled doors accessing eight classrooms on the north and south sides of the corridor. There is an exterior entrance at the west end of the corridor and an entrance to the cafeteria on the east end. The corridor incorporates an early linoleum tile floor over a wood floor, and the walls are treated with plaster, a wood crown molding and chair rail, and Keene's cement wainscoting. There are modern florescent light fixtures affixed to the ceiling. Each



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classroom has a single entry via a single-leaf, wood, paneled door. Surmounting the door is a transom.

Each classroom contains similar linoleum flooring found in the hall. There are blackboards on two walls, closets on one wall, and the last wall is filled with window openings. The windows are paired 8/8, double-hung sash with wood frames. Below the windows are metal radiators. The walls in each classroom are plastered with a wood crown molding and chair rail, and Keene's cement wainscoting.

In addition to the main classrooms are smaller rooms near the main entrance. Opposite the small foyer, across the main corridor, is a small room with similar treatment to the main classrooms, but it does not have blackboards. There is a single-leaf, wood, paneled door accessing this room opposite the foyer. To the west of the foyer is an office with a single-leaf, wood, paneled door off the main corridor. To the immediate east of the foyer are two smaller rooms, a conference room and workroom, accessed from the library to the east along the south elevation. This library was intended for a classroom, but was converted to a library during the planning process. The conference room is accessed via the west wall of the library near the north corner. A small workroom is located to the south of the conference room, and is accessed via a single-leaf, wood, paneled door in the south wall of the conference room. The wall between the workroom and conference room contains multiple-light, fixed windows flanking the single leaf, wood, paneled door surmounted by a transom.

The two classrooms on the north elevation to the west of the office can be combined by opening folding, wood, paneled partitions of 8-foot wood doors. The doors use tracks above and below mounted on the wall and floor, respectively. The doors retain original hardware to operate the folding door system, which was manufactured by Richards-Wilcox.

Restrooms for each gender are located on the east and west ends of the hallway on the south corners. Porcelained toilets line one wall, with porcelained sinks on the opposite wall. Details include tile on the floor and wainscoting.

On the east elevation is a perpendicularly oriented addition that contains a cafeteria with kitchen. It is accessed via the main hall and has a large open space with an enclosed kitchen along the south wall. There is a counter for serving lunches on the south wall of the cafeteria between the cafeteria and kitchen, which contains wood-framed openings. To access the kitchen area, there are single-leaf, wood doors on the west end of the north wall. The kitchen is an open space with counters on the west elevation.

## **Gymnasium**

The gymnasium is a concrete block building with applied 5-course American bond brick veneer. The west

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façade faces South 6<sup>th</sup> Street and features a two-story entrance pavilion or block recessed from the façade. It is accented by a metal canopy surmounted by metal letters spelling, "GYMNASIUM", sheltering the recessed entrance. The lower, one-story, side blocks flanking the central pavilion have concrete frame window groupings and concrete coping. The pavilion also has concrete coping. The strong horizontal lines of the coping and canopy, along with the rectangular, wide entrance give the building horizontal and squat façade.

The wide stair leading to the entrance has wing walls that incorporate planters. The doors leading to the interior consist of two groupings of three single-leaf, wood doors.

The north and south side elevations are comprised of the central, two-story block forming six bays divided by pilasters with parged coping. Between the pilasters are metal, awning windows. The low one-story blocks to the north and south occupy the west four bays of the two-story block and have similar awnings windows.

All roofs are flat with asphalt treatment.

The interior is comprised of an open gymnasium flanked by lockers rooms. There are offices and storage closets on the west end accessed via single leaf, wood doors. Single leaf doors on the north and south elevations access the lockers rooms. Upon entering the locker room, there is a poured concrete stair descending to the open space. The spaces are currently empty. The flooring is poured concrete and the walls are exposed concrete block.

The gymnasium has wood floors and exposed concrete block walls. The roof structural system is visible and pendant lights hang from the ceiling. At the east and west ends of the building, there are basketball hoops suspended from the ceiling and supported by fixtures attached to the concrete walls.

**Home Economics Building Foundation**

The concrete pad is rectangular in shape. It lies immediately to the east of the East Suffolk High School and is oriented north-south. The building was constructed in 1956 and demolished in the 1980s. This is a non-contributing resource.

**Agricultural Building Foundation (not visible presently)**

The concrete pad is rectangular in shape. It lies on the east boundary of the site oriented north-south. It is located under construction material on the site. The building was constructed in 1944 and was demolished

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in the 1980s. This is a non-contributing resource.

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**Significant Dates (cont)**

1950 – Heating upgraded in East Suffolk High School

1951 – Construction of Gymnasium

1952 – Addition of Cafeteria wing on East Suffolk High School

**Statement of Significance (con't)**

**Summary Statement of Significance**

The East Suffolk School Complex is a group of three buildings and two sites that are foundations of support buildings that have since been demolished. The complex was developed for African-American school children that resided in the surrounding East Suffolk community. The earliest building dates to 1926-1927 and was an elementary school constructed with financial assistance of the Rosenwald Fund. Until 1938, it was the only building on the site. In 1939, community members solicited for the construction of a high school for the students in the East Suffolk neighborhood. Funding for this school was granted as a part of the "Pump Priming Program", which was a Federal Government New Deal stimulation program that facilitated the construction of public buildings. A school was designed by the State Board of Education in a similar style of the existing elementary school. The school opened in 1939 with 227 students. In 1944, an agricultural building was added to the site to augment the curriculum of the high school. Additional buildings were added in the 1950s, including the Gymnasium (1951), a cafeteria wing to the East Suffolk High School (1952), and the Home Economics Building (1956). The school complex served the African-American community, until newer schools were constructed during the 1960s building program, which provided modern buildings on other sites to meet the educational needs of the growing school-age population. The entire complex was converted to the East Suffolk Elementary School in 1966 and finally closed in 1979.

**East Suffolk School Complex**

The East Suffolk Elementary School was constructed in 1926-1927 during the period of growing educational programs for African-American school-age children. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, most urban areas in Virginia had publicly funded education programs for African-American children. Unlike the urban areas, rural schools and public education for African-American school children in the south were not a prevalent.

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East Suffolk Elementary School was located in Nansemond County outside the City of Suffolk in 1927. It is located in a predominantly African-American community located to the east of the city. The streets are organized in a grid pattern and the community is separated from downtown Suffolk by an industrial area. The character of the houses in the neighborhood date to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and are Colonial Revival and Craftsman inspired.

The East Suffolk Elementary School was a “Rosenwald School”, which was a school constructed with funds provided by the Rosenwald Foundation. The Rosenwald Foundation provided funds to primarily rural southern states for the construction of school buildings. The school building’s construction cost a total of \$18,000.00. Of this figure, the local African-American community raised \$3300.00, \$13,000.00 were public funds, and \$1500.00 were Rosenwald funds.<sup>1</sup>

The Rosenwald Fund was founded by Julius Rosenwald, Manager of Sears and Roebuck Company, the largest mail-order house in the United States. The fund was not the first established fund for the promotion of education for African-Americans in the United State after the Civil War. The Peabody Education Fund was founded in 1867 and sought to improve education for all races. It was founded by George Peabody and remained in existence until 1914. Another fund established was the John F. Slater Fund. Founded in 1882, it sought to provide funding for salaries for teachers employed within the public schools. Its founder donated \$1,000,000, which was augmented upon the dissolution of the Peabody fund in 1914. Another fund established specifically for the education of African-American school children was the Jeanes Fund. Established through a donation by Miss Anna Jeanes in 1905, it provided for a schoolteacher in each county who supervised the education of African-American school children.<sup>2</sup>

The Rosenwald Fund was specific to the construction of school buildings in 15 southern states, focusing on rural school construction. Rosenwald, upon making a visit to Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee University in 1914, saw in the surrounding agrarian communities a need to provide funding to promote school building construction. The fund was based at Tuskegee during its early years,<sup>3</sup> and was based upon the idea of “for the well-being of mankind” as outlined by Julius Rosenwald.<sup>4</sup>

The fund was formally established October 30, 1917 in Washington, DC. It had five primary goals, which included the formation of a state agent who would monitor African-American education, and the creation of modern and well-designed school building plans.<sup>5</sup> The fund also required that matching funds be raised by communities to assist with the construction of the school building. The major share of the cost burden would still fall on the locality and the state, but the Rosenwald Fund and private donations usually contributed an average of 15.36% of the building costs.<sup>6</sup>

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By 1932, between 25% and 40% of African-American school children were enrolled in a school funded by Rosenwald. By the dissolution of the fund in 1948, 5358 schools were constructed, educating 663,795 children.<sup>7</sup>

The fund in Virginia provided more than \$12 million in school property value developed between 1920 and 1946. The total figure of school construction costs was \$6.5 million in Virginia. Of that cost, only \$98,795 was provided by the Rosenwald fund. African-American citizens who advocated the construction of the school within their community provided \$143,392. 386 school buildings were constructed with Rosenwald schools funds in Virginia by the end of the fund.<sup>8</sup>

The East Suffolk Elementary School design is based upon architectural drawings provided by the State Department of Education. The measured drawings could be obtained for school construction by Virginia localities as a part of the need for modern school buildings. The standard architectural drawings made by the State Department of Education reflected the minimal requirements for school buildings for various functions, from elementary schools and high schools to special program buildings, such as Home Economics cottages or Agricultural Buildings.

East Suffolk Elementary School provided classes from grade one to eight until the construction of the high school in 1939. The school operated as an elementary school until 1966, when a new East Suffolk Elementary School opened across an open field from the East Suffolk Complex on Freeney Avenue and 8<sup>th</sup> Street. It was then that the school was converted to part of the middle school. The school closed in 1979 and lay vacant until it was converted to a Community Center in the 1987.<sup>9</sup> It now houses a branch library, computer lab and public space for meetings.

The East Suffolk High School was constructed during the largest period of school construction prior to the outbreak of World War II. The State Board of Education designed the simple 1-story brick school for the African-American community just east of the City of Suffolk in Nansemond County. The school remained active until 1979.

Construction on the East Suffolk High School began in late 1938, with a completion date for the commencement of the 1939-1940 calendar school year. The funding for the construction of the school was granted by the State Board of Education of Virginia with federal funds that became available in July 1938. In 1938, the Public Works Administration of the United States Government provided funding to states in what they called the "Pump-priming Program."<sup>10</sup>

The "Pump-priming Program" was a program of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal to help America

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recover from the Great Depression. In 1935, the Works Progress Administration was created in the second New Deal proposal to appropriate funds for federal-funded projects. The administration employed 9 million people in public projects, including the construction of schools, hospitals, bridges, roads, and airports. The total expenditure of the administration was \$11.4 billion.<sup>11</sup>

One of the focuses of the administration was the construction of schools in the South and other depressed areas. Inequality in education for African-Americans and poor whites in the South was prevalent, especially in the rural southern states. Poverty and an agrarian society in the South was a factor in the lack of schools, and the education of African-Americans was hampered by continued reluctance by government officials to provide adequate facilities.<sup>12</sup>

When grants for the funds were made in 1938, the average state's allocation for school construction was 28.8%. Virginia exceeded the average and allocated more than half of its funds, 52%, for school construction. In 1938-1939, there were 43 buildings or additions to existing school buildings constructed in Virginia. Modification or construction by racial group was 37 school additions or schools for white students, and 6 for African-American students. The cost for the construction in 1938-1939 in Virginia was \$4,365,431.16, which included architects' fees.<sup>13</sup>

The East Suffolk High School, initially called the County Training School, Suffolk, was part of this building program, and was one of the 6 African-American schools constructed in Virginia that school calendar year. The school contained eight classrooms and five auxiliary rooms. The cost to construct the building was \$36,587.00 and additional equipment for the new school cost \$2,697.45, making the total cost for the new school \$39,284.45.<sup>14</sup>

The original school design was made by the Division of School Buildings, State Department of Education, Richmond, Virginia. The designs were made in October 1938, and were modified during the drawing process and shortly thereafter. Originally, the school was planned with 8 rooms; 7 classrooms and a kitchen. The plan was modified by converting the kitchen to a classroom, and converting a classroom to a library. In addition to these modifications, the site plan was also changed to orient the school similarly to the elementary school, which was constructed in 1927. The original site plan called for the high school to back-up to the elementary school and face east. The reorientation was more successful as there was not an entrance onto a creek, which bounds the site to the south, and both schools opened to the lane on the site leading from 7<sup>th</sup> Street, North.<sup>15</sup>

In 1952, a cafeteria was added to the building on the east elevation. It was oriented perpendicularly to the original building, but retains the same construction type, details and massing.<sup>16</sup> The heating in the school was updated in 1950.<sup>17</sup>

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The school opened in 1939 with 227 students. The high school was three-year with grades nine, ten, and eleven. Teachers and the principal of the school were all college educated and supervised by the county school administrator. Courses taught were U.S. Government, Chemistry, Mathematics, Algebra, Geometry, Biology, Home Economics, English, Civics, General Science, American History, French, and Chorus. In 1941 Agriculture was added to the curriculum. Development of the curriculum occurred over the next 14 years to include additional subjects as the school population increased.<sup>18</sup>

In 1966 John F. Kennedy High School was opened and the students from East Suffolk High School moved to their new school. East Suffolk High School was converted to a middle school. It remained a middle school until 1979, when it closed to public instruction. The school has remained vacant, except for a few tenants that only occupied the building for short periods.<sup>19</sup>

The Agricultural building was added to the site in 1944. It was a frame building containing four classrooms and cost \$15,000 to construct.<sup>20</sup> The Agricultural program was considered an important program in the south, as it was predominantly agrarian. It provided education to boys on agricultural processes and techniques. Its female counterpart was the Home Economics program, which educated young girls traditional female roles. The Home Economics building, also called cottage, was constructed in 1956 on the East Suffolk Complex.<sup>21</sup> Both buildings were separate from the educational program of the school. It allowed the students to focus on the subject separately from the standard academic educational program.

The Agricultural and Home Economics buildings were constructed based upon designs provided by the State Department of Education and were Colonial Revival or Bungalow in design. They were demolished in the 1980s.

A gymnasium was added to the site in 1951. It was constructed using modern material and a modern design, and stylistically, is not in keeping with the Revival-style buildings. The architect is unknown for the gymnasium. It provided indoor recreation space that became a part of the educational system statewide. Many early 20<sup>th</sup> century African-American school buildings were augmented with either additions or additional buildings to provide programs within the curriculum.<sup>22</sup>

The school complex meets National Register Criteria A (Event) for its association with Education and Ethnic Heritage – Black due to its association with the Rosenwald Fund, New Deal Pump Priming program, and the development of an African-American school complex in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.



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1. Hanchette, Tom, "List of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia," (Charlotte, NC, n.d.) (unpublished)
2. Bond, Horace Mann, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order, (New York: Octagon Books, 1996), 133-136.
3. Ibid, 140-141.
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18. Norfleet, Dr. Thelma. "Honorary Banquet, East Suffolk High School Alumni Association, Inc." (unpublished)
19. Suffolk City Directories, 1966-1991.
20. State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report, 1943-1944.
21. Ibid., 1955-1956.
22. State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report, 1950-1951 to 1958-1959.

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**Geographical Data (con't)**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

The boundaries of the site are inclusive of Cyress Borough, Insert 35F, Rosemont plan (R), parcel G-B. The boundaries include 6 acres of land, bound roughly by South 6<sup>th</sup> Street to the west; the terminus of South 7<sup>th</sup> Street, lots 8 and 20 of the Rosemont Tract, parcel G-A to the north; lots 10, 11 and 12 of the Rosemont Tract to the east, and Camp Mill Pond Run to the south.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundaries reflect the parcel containing the buildings associated with the East Suffolk School Complex dating from 1926 to 1952.

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  2. Suffolk, Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of East Suffolk School Complex from South 6<sup>th</sup> Street, looking east
  7. Photograph Number 1
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
  2. Suffolk, Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of East Suffolk Elementary School and East Suffolk High School, northwest oblique
  7. Photograph Number 2
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of East Suffolk Elementary School and East Suffolk High School, northeast oblique
  7. Photograph Number 3
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
  2. Suffolk, Virginia
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  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of East Suffolk Elementary School, northeast oblique
  7. Photograph Number 4
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2. Suffolk, Virginia
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  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Foyer of East Suffolk Elementary School, looking west
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
  2. Suffolk, Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Auditorium of East Suffolk Elementary School, looking south
  7. Photograph Number 6
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
  2. Suffolk, Virginia
  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Hallway of East Suffolk Elementary School, looking north
  7. Photograph Number 7
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Classroom in East Suffolk Elementary School, looking north
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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5. Department of Historic Resources
6. View of East Suffolk High School, northwest oblique

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  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Corridor in East Suffolk High School, looking west
  7. Photograph Number 10
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Classroom in East Suffolk High School, looking southeast
  7. Photograph Number 11
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Combined Classrooms in East Suffolk High School, looking northwest
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1. East Suffolk School Complex
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  3. Kimble A. David
  4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Gymnasium, west façade
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4. May 2002
  5. Department of Historic Resources
  6. View of Interior of Gymnasium, looking west
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<sup>1</sup> Hanchette, Tom, "List of Rosenwald Schools in Virginia," (Charlotte, NC, n.d.) (unpublished)

<sup>2</sup> Bond, Horace Mann, The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order, (New York: Octagon Books, 1996), 133-136.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 140-141.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, Samuel, Builders of Goodwill; the story of the State agents of Negro education in the South, 1910 to 1950. (Nashville, TN: Tennessee Book Co., 1950), 66.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, 68.

<sup>8</sup> Hanchett.

<sup>9</sup> Suffolk City Directories, 1966 to 1987.

<sup>10</sup> State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Richmond, School Year 1938-1939.

<sup>11</sup> Harry L. Hopkins, Administrator, "America's Economic Problem No. 1," Works Progress Administration, August 5, 1938. (<http://newdeal.feri.org/works/wpa06.htm>)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> State Department of Education (Virginia). School Year 1938-1939.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> State Board of Education (Virginia), Architectural Drawings, County Training School, Suffolk, Nansemond County, Virginia, October 1938.

<sup>16</sup> State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report, 1950-1951.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 1949-1950.

<sup>18</sup> Norfleet, Dr. Thelma. "Honorary Banquet, East Suffolk High School Alumni Association, Inc." (unpublished)

<sup>19</sup> Suffolk City Directories, 1966-1991.

<sup>20</sup> State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report, 1943-1944.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 1955-1956.

<sup>22</sup> State Board of Education (Virginia). Annual Report, 1950-1951 to 1958-1959.